

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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-----087696 131849Z /41

R 121330Z MAY 78
FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7662
INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L JOHANNESBURG 1209

CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SF
SUBJECT: MONTLANA-MULDER MEETING IN DOUBT

1. THE MUCH TALKED ABOUT MEETING BETWEEN MINISTER
OF PLURAL AFFAIRS MULDER AND COMMITTEE OF TEN CHAIRMAN
NTATHO MOTLANA, HERALDED AS A BREAKTHROUGH BY MANY
IN CONVINCING THE GOVERNMENT TO TALK TO SOWETO'S
"REAL" LEADERS, APPEARS TO BE IN SOME DIFFICULTY AS
A RESULT OF PRESSURES ON BOTH MULDER AND MOTLANA.

2. THE MEETING, INITIATED BY AFRIKANER JOURNALIST
ANDRIES BOTHA, WAS TO TAKE PLACE SATURDAY, MAY 13,
IN CAPE TOWN. USING COMMUNITY COUNCIL CHAIRMAN
DAVID THEBAHALI AS AN INTERMEDIARY, MOTLANA AND MULDER
WERE SCHEDULED TO REVIEW ISSUES OF SELF-GOVERNMENT
IN SOWETO. IT WAS AN AWKWARD ARRANGEMENT AT BEST,
CONSIDERING THE THE NEED FOR MULDER TO RETAIN A ROLE
FOR THEBAHALI AS COMMUNITY COUNCIL CHAIRMAN WHILE
MOTLANA HAD TO CONTAIN HIS WELL-KNOWN DISLIKE FOR
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THEBAHALI AND RETREAT FROM HIS PLEDGE NOT TO TALK
WHILE FIVE MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE OF TEN REMAIN LOCKED UP.

3. THE CONFUSION THAT SEEMS TO EXIST ABOUT THE MEETING
AND WHO STANDS TO LOSE (OR GAIN) THE MOST, HAS
AROUSED THE INTERESTS OF MANY IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY,
INCLUDING PERCY QOBOZA WHO, UPON BEING INFORMED

THAT THEBAHALI WAS INVOLVED, PLEDGED TO FORCE MOTLANA TO BREAK IT OFF. ON THE OTHER SIDE, ANDRIES BOTHA REMARKED CONFIDENTIALLY THAT "AT LEAST" FIVE MEMBERS OF THE NEWLY ELECTED COMMUNITY COUNCIL WOULD WITHDRAW SUPPORT OF THEBAHALI IF HE WENT AHEAD AS PROPOSED INTERMEDIARY.

4. THE UPSHOT OF ALL THIS IS THAT PROPOSED MEETING MAY VERY LIKELY BE CANCELLED BECAUSE, MUCH AS MULDER WOULD APPARENTLY LIKE AN EXCUSE TO DIALOGUE WITH MOTLANA, HE CANNOT JETTISON HIS MUCH MALIGNED COMMUNITY COUNCIL CHAIRMAN THEBAHALI. THEBAHALI IS AN AMBITIOUS MAN WHO IS ALSO A SHREWED POLITICIAN. HE CANNOT AFFORD TO BE SEEN AS STANDING ASIDE FOR MOTLANA IN ANY CASE, PARTICULARLY IF HE COMES UNDER RENEWED PRESSURE FROM HIS COUNCIL ASSOCIATES. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE MILITANTS CANNOT LIKE MOTLANA'S DIALOGUE WHILE HALF THE DETAINEES REMAIN IN PRISON. THE DISTASTE OF THEBAHALI BY QOBOZA AND OTHERS WILL ALSO BRING DIFFICULT PRESSURES TO BEAR. WHETHER MOTLANA CAN, IN THE END, COME FACE TO FACE WITH MULDER WILL BE A MEASURE OF THE POLITICAL PRAGMATISM OF THESE TWO MEN.

5. ONE FINAL INSIGHT THAT MAY CONTRIBUTE TO WHY MOTLANA HAS GAMBLED HIS CREDIBILITY BY DEALING WITH MULDER WAS OFFERED BY BOTHA WHO REVEALED THAT MULDER CONFIDENTIAL

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HAD TOLD HIM CONFIDENTIALLY THAT HE (MULDER) WAS PREPARED TO DROP THE WEST RAND BOARD (WRAB), SOWETO'S GOVERNING BODY, AS A CONCESSION TO POLITICAL AUTONOMY IF MOTLANA, AS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MORE MILITANT POLITICAL ELEMENTS, WAS PREPARED TO MEET HIM HALF-WAY.

6. MULDER ANNOUNCED THURSDAY, MAY 11, THAT MEETING WITH MOTLANA HAD, IN FACT, BEEN POSTPONED.
JOHNSON

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